

We Are NOT All The Same

I. Introduction:

A. The Scriptures teach us to be “likeminded” (**Romans 15:5** and **Philippians 2:2**).

1. That is, for there to be no divisions among us (**I Corinthians 1:10**).
2. Meaning, we all walk by the same rule (**Philippians 3:16**).
3. We are to be unified (**Psalms 133:1**, **II Corinthians 13:11**, and **Ephesians 4:1-6**).
4. Some people read the above Scriptures and lose their ability to reason. Some actually conclude that we are to think and behave exactly the same ways in all things. That leads to various errors. It is very ignorant.

B. That same rule we are to walk by permits us to have differences in actions and thinking (i.e. **I Corinthians 7:1-40**).

1. There are many liberties wherein we may choose differently (**Romans 14:1-15:9**).
2. There are natural differences that do not effect unity (**Matthew 25:14-30**, **Galatians 3:26-29**, **I Peter 4:11**, and **I Peter 5:5**).
3. In the age of spiritual gifts, God-given differences were highlighted in the congregations in Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus (**Romans 12:3-8**, **I Corinthians 12:3-31**, and **Ephesians 4:7-16**).

II. Body: Man Is Not Permitted To Make Themselves A Standard By Which Others Are Measured (**II Corinthians 10:12**).

A. Think about how Paul had to be flexible in areas of liberty (**I Corinthians 9:19-23**).

1. He was willing to abandon some authorized liberties to help the conscience of the weak (**I Corinthians 8:13**).
2. He had Timothy do the same (**Acts 16:1-4**).
3. Yet, he was certainly uncompromising when it came to areas of liberty being made law (**Galatians 2:1-5**).

B. Likemindedness is a broad subject. Think about what Paul wrote in **Philippians 2:19-23**.

1. This should not be understood as Paul saying no one else was teaching the truth (**Acts 15:6-35**, **Acts 15:40-41**, **I Corinthians 16:15-19**, and **Colossians 4:10-13**).
2. It should not be understood as though there were not other brethren who cared about saints either (**Romans 16:1-4**). Even the remainder of this context will bear that out (Epaphroditus - **Philippians 2:25-30**).
3. Therefore, being united in the one faith (**Ephesians 4:5**) is not the same as thinking alike in all things.

4. Timothy was more like Paul than anyone else. That did not mean everyone else was unfaithful.

C. With all of that in mind, think about how we can all walk by the same rule but have many differences that need to be respected.

1. We are taught to comfort one another, to rejoice together, to sorrow together (**Romans 12:15** and **I Thessalonians 5:11**). That doesn't mean we all rejoice, grieve, or needed comforted in the same ways or in the same circumstances. I.E. Some may want surrounded with brethren in times of sorrow while others may want to be alone. Some misapply **Matthew 7:12** on this matter, which teaches the principle of love thy neighbor as thyself (cf. **Matthew 22:34-39**).

2. In using hospitality towards one another (**Romans 12:13** and **I Peter 4:8-9**), that does not mean we are all social butterflies. Some people like their own space from time to time (i.e. **Matthew 14:23**).

3. In regard to what you are capable of... Remember that God judges based on each individual's abilities (**Luke 12:42-48**). Therefore, do not think that everyone is going to understand as quickly or slowly as you. Everyone is not going to move as fast or slow as you do/have. That is why salvation has to be worked out by each individual (**Philippians 2:12**).

4. Some of us may have a past wherein we have known the depths of Satan (**Revelation 2:23**; cf. **I Corinthians 6:9-11** and **I John 3:8-10**) [so to speak]. Think about how that means we look at some things differently and feel certain guilts that others may not know (i.e. **I Corinthians 15:9** and **Ephesians 3:8**).

5. Some have been taught since their youth the truth (**II Timothy 3:15**). Isn't that an advantage and a difference (**Romans 3:1-2**)? It can also be a disadvantage because it can be taken for granted among other things.

6. Even when one may have in the past committed some sins or in the present struggles with like temptations, that does not mean the general subject of that sin is the same for each of us. For example, not all practices of idolatry are the same (**II Chronicles 25:14** and **II Kings 21:1-9**).

7. Would all of us be able to be stoned to a point of supposed death and then head out the next day to preach the Gospel (**Acts 14:19-21**)? So, might we all deal with physical ailments differently?

III. Conclusion: **Philippians 2:3-5**